

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 235

Introduced by Assembly Member Cogdill
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Benoit, Dutton, Maze, Pacheco,
Plescia, and Runner)

January 30, 2003

An act relating to school transportation.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 235, as introduced, Cogdill. School Transportation

Existing law authorizes the governing board of any school district to provide for the transportation of pupils to and from school, whenever in the judgement of the board, the transportation is advisable and there are good reasons for providing the transportation.

This bill would state the legislative intent to define the requirements for a new pupil transportation funding formula that will optimize the distribution and use of the funds currently spent for pupil transportation services provided by school districts. The bill would require the Legislative Analyst to conduct a study to review the strengths and limitations of the present pupil transportation system, to consider alternative ways transportation funding can be allocated among school districts, to develop options for the Legislature to consider regarding changes in the current transportation funding formula, and to submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Legislature. The bill would require the State Department of Education to provide assistance to the Legislative Analyst in obtaining existing data on the pupil transportation program.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares as
2 follows:

3 (1) The current funding formula for pupil transportation
4 services is 21 years old.

5 (2) The current allocation of funds to school districts for
6 regular transportation services is much less than the actual costs
7 that are incurred by school districts.

8 (3) Moreover, the current formula is much less than the amount
9 received in 1982, as adjusted over the years for cost-of-living
10 adjustments and growth.

11 (4) Due to the large amount of growth in California over the
12 past 21 years, some school districts with rapidly growing
13 enrollment have been forced to dip into their general fund to cover
14 the excess transportation costs.

15 (5) Rural districts that have pupils who must travel long
16 distances to and from school also receive state reimbursements
17 that are less than costs.

18 (6) California provides transportation services to over 960,000
19 children at a cost of over \$1 billion annually. The state's share of
20 those expenditures is only 47 percent or \$470 million.

21 (7) Unfortunately, California is last among the states in the
22 percentage of children who ride schoolbuses.

23 (8) California needs to focus on school transportation funding.
24 The state needs to redesign funding formulas to provide incentives
25 that reward the most efficient school districts.

26 (9) California public schools operate one of the oldest
27 schoolbus fleets in the nation.

28 (10) The state has over 2,000 pre-1977 schoolbuses that are so
29 old they do not meet the current federal safety standards. The state
30 operates another 6,500 pre-1987 schoolbuses that are a key source
31 of direct public exposure to toxic diesel particles.

32 (11) With a more adequate funding formula for pupil
33 transportation, transportation costs can be reduced and new
34 schoolbuses can be purchased.

35 (12) The current pupil transportation system funding situation
36 is troublesome and needs to be examined.

37 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to define the requirements
38 for a new pupil transportation funding formula that will optimize

1 the distribution and use of the funds currently spent for pupil
2 transportation services provided by school districts.

3 SEC. 2. (a) The Legislative Analyst shall conduct a study to
4 do all of the following:

5 (1) Review the strengths and limitations of the present pupil
6 transportation funding formula.

7 (2) Consider alternatives by which transportation funding can
8 be allocated among school districts.

9 (3) Develop options for the Legislature to consider regarding
10 changes in the pupil transportation funding formula.

11 (b) The Legislative Analyst shall submit a report to the
12 Legislature on its findings and recommendations no later than
13 September 15, 2004.

14 SEC. 3. The State Department of Education shall provide
15 assistance to the Legislative Analyst in obtaining existing data on
16 the pupil transportation program.

